

(b) if so, the reasons for continuing with temporary alternative channels till date;

(c) the technical reasons for delay in providing optic fibre link with Gunupur Telephone Exchange after completion of cable work thereof;

(d) whether the monitoring of telecommunications system in DET Koraput, Orissa is done on time; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b) Telecommunication links to Gunupur were disrupted due to blasting of a microwave repeater at Gumma by some extremists. The trunk service to Gunupur was, however, restored immediately by installing an 8 channel Open Wire carrier system. In June, 96 it was replaced by one MCPC-VSAT to provide STD service. An Optical Fibre link connecting Gunupur as a permanent arrangement was commissioned on 30.07.97 and is working satisfactorily.

(c) The delay in commissioning of the Optic Fibre connectivity was due to the following reasons:

- (i) In April '97 a 3 phase power feeding transformer at Gunupur OFC developed fault. It was replaced in June, 1997.
- (ii) An end link connecting the OFC station at Gunupur to Berhampur TAX was commissioned in July '97 to extend the circuits.
- (iii) There was delay in the construction of the building at Parlakhemundi, Gunupur and Ramanguda.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. The operational Planning cell of CGMT Orissa closely monitors, through technical vigilance report, the working of exchanges, transmission systems in addition to the monitoring of the same by TDE Koraput himself.

1st/Ind Class Passes for Train Journeys

3694. SHRI S. AJAY KUMAR : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the minimum pay scale required for getting 1st/Ind class passes for train journeys in the case of Railway Board employees;

(b) the minimum scale required for the same in other departments;

(c) the reasons for discrimination towards Railway Board employees in this regard;

(d) whether the Government allow the employees of Railway Board to opt for either multiple Ind class tickets or the single to and fro upper class tickets or passes as in the case of other departments; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) Eligibility for getting 1st Class pass on privilege account in Indian Railways including Railway Board employees is as follows :

I. Employees appointed prior to 01.08.1969

- (i) drawing pay of Rs. 1530/- or above provided the employees are in a scale the maximum of which is Rs. 2040/- or above.
- (ii) Nurses drawing pay of Rs. 1400/- or above and Lady Health Visitors drawing pay of Rs. 1230/- or above

II. Employees appointed on or after 01.08.1969 and not later than 31.03.1987

- (i) drawing pay of Rs. 1680/- or above provided they are in a scale the maximum of which is Rs. 2200/- or above.
- (ii) Nurses/Lady Health Visitors drawing pay of Rs. 1480/- or above

III. Employees appointed on or after 01.04.1987

Drawing pay of Rs. 2301/- or above or if they are in a scale the minimum of which is Rs. 2000/-.

IV. Eligibility for getting II Class Passes on privilege account in Indian Railways including Railway Board employees is as follows :

All Group 'C' and Group 'D' employees other than those mentioned above.

(b) There is no system of Passes in other Departments.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Mining in Maharashtra

3695. SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) the details of private sector companies in the country which have been permitted to undertake mining activities in Maharashtra;

(b) the terms and conditions laid down for permitting private sector companies to undertake mining activities;

(c) whether the Government are aware that the private sector companies are violating the norms and conditions of the Government and illegally conducting mining activities; and

(d) if so the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) and (b) Mining rights are granted by the concerned State Governments in accordance with the provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957 and rules made thereunder. Mining activity in the country has historically been undertaken both, by public sector as well as private sector companies. The total No. of 60 companies in private sector have been permitted to undertake mining activities in Maharashtra for minerals other than non atomic, non fuel and minor minerals. As per Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957 mining rights can be given only to an Indian National or a company defined in sub-section (1) of section (3) of the Companies Act, 1956. Provided that in respect of any mineral specified in the First Schedule, no prospecting licence or mining lease shall be granted except with the previous approval of the Central Government.

(c) and (d) Indian Bureau of Mines enforces Mineral Conservation and Development Rules 1988 (MCDR) through regular inspecting and any violation of rule whenever observed and pointed out to the lessee for rectifications in the interest of systematic and scientific development of mines and protection of environment. In case of chronic defaulters of MCDR, 1988, cases are filed in the local courts against such companies if the violations have not been complied with within the stipulated time.

Amguri Power Project in Assam

3696. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of Gas based Amguri Power Project in Assam and particulars of agencies entrusted with the work;

(b) the reasons for delay in execution of the said project;

(c) the quantum of gas committed by Oil Industry in the first MOU and the action initiated to ensure gas linkage;

(d) the target fixed for commissioning of the project;

(e) whether a proposal for installing the project with alternative fuel is under consideration; and

(f) if so, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) to (d) Work on the Amguri gas based power project in Assam has not yet been taken into hand. The Government of Assam has transferred the project to NTPC which has not yet been allocated the requisite gas for this project. The implementation of the project would be dependent upon a firm gas allocation being made for this project by the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.

(e) and (f) As of now an alternative fuel is not being considered for the project.

Marketing of Jute Products

3697. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry in consultation with the Textiles Ministry has prepared a comprehensive plan for diversification and marketing of jute products; and

(b) if so, the broad features thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI KINJARAPPU YERRANNAIDU) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Question does not arise.

[Translation]

Rural Development Projects of Uttar Pradesh

3698. SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN : Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether some rural development projects of Uttar Pradesh particularly regarding Meerut Division are still lying pending for approval with the Union Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof, project-wise and the dates of their pendency;

(c) the estimated cost of each of these projects;

(d) the reasons for delay in granting approval to these projects; and

(e) the time by which these projects are likely to be approved?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI KINJARAPPU YERRANNAIDU) :

(a) to (e) No rural development project is pending for approval with the Ministry so far as Uttar Pradesh State is concerned.

[English]

Provision of Finance by PFC on Lease in Delhi

3699. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Power Finance Corporation has explored/ exploring the possibilities of providing finance on lease for power project in National Capital Territory of Delhi;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) the total funds provided for the power projects in Delhi during the last three years, year-wise and details of achievements thereof?